

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This is in response to the Office Action dated February 26, 2008. Claims 1-26 are pending. Claims 1-26 stand rejected in the outstanding Office Action.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed August 14, 2007.

The rejection of claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Mizumoto (US 6,409,597) in view of Fukuda (US 6,670,957) is respectfully traversed.

Mizumoto discloses changing the distance between a virtual camera and a game character (e.g., a car) according to predetermined rules based on a condition of the game character. The virtual camera is positioned at a default position behind the moving car, e.g., P3 in Fig. 5. If one of a list of conditions occurs as the car is moving, then the virtual camera moves to a predetermined set position at a predetermined set speed. For example, if the car has crashed, then the virtual camera moves to point P1 (closest to the car) at speed 4 points/frame (wherein the whole range from P1 to P2 is 500 points). If the car has spun, then the virtual camera moves to point 300 at a speed of 3 points/frame. If none of the enumerated conditions is satisfied, then the virtual camera is positioned at the default point P3 and moves at a speed of 2 points/frame.

The Examiner acknowledged that Mizumoto does not teach “a difference length calculating programmed logic circuitry for calculating at said intervals of said predetermined number of frames a difference length between a predetermined reference distance and a distance between said location of said target location and a location of said virtual camera; a virtual-camera-location updating programmed logic circuitry for updating at said intervals of said predetermined number of frames in order said location of said virtual camera in such a manner that said difference length calculated by said difference length calculating programmed logic

circuitry is reduced by a predetermined rate when said difference length exists”, recited in claims 1, 6-8, 13-14. Claims 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25 recite a similar recitation “a distance from said target location to a reference location determined in a predetermined manner toward the location of said virtual camera at a predetermined ratio is shortened”. He then turned to Fukuda for the missing limitation.

Fukuda discloses a method for moving the location of a virtual camera in a game space so that it follows the movement of a game character, e.g., a plane. Regarding the positional relationship between the location 601 of the moving plane and the location 606 of the virtual camera (e.g., camera setup point), Fukuda offers three conditions (1) to (3) for determining the position of the camera setup point 606 (line 50, col. 12 to line 27, col. 13). Based on the values of a coefficient “a” and coefficient “M”, “the camera setup point 606 moves backward relative to the moving direction of the controlled object 601 as the moving speed of the controlled object 601 is increased”, lines 28-36, col. 13. In other words, as the plane speeds away, the virtual camera remains further away behind. This can be seen in Fig. 11 and also in Fig. 13, which shows pictorial images photographed by the virtual camera 609 when the plane is in positions (a) to (c), corresponding to Figs. 13A to 13C.

From the above, it is clear that Fukuda teaches away from the disclosed method. Whereas in the disclosed method, the virtual camera is moved so that its distance from the target location is gradually decreased, in Fukuda’s method, the opposite occurs, as the distance between the position of the virtual camera and the target location is gradually increased. The method of Mizumoto modified by Fukuda would not move the virtual camera according to the claimed limitations, e.g., so that “said difference length calculated by said difference length calculating programmed logic circuitry is reduced by a predetermined rate when said difference length

exists”.

The Examiner acknowledged that Fukuda teaches that the virtual camera moves further from the controlled object according to a moving speed of the controlled object, but he further argued that “Accordingly the virtual camera would move closer to the controlled object according to a moving speed of the controlled object as well”, see last two lines on page 11 of the Office Action. There is no support in Fukuda for the above statement. The Examiner mentioned Fig. 14 as allegedly providing support. However, Fig. 14 depicts the general process for realizing the flight simulation involving the varying positioning of the game character, e.g., a plane, in the game space and the corresponding viewpoint from the virtual camera. Fig. 14 does not teach or suggest moving the virtual camera closer to the moving plane. In addition, Figs. 7-11, cited by the Examiner as showing the frame by frame calculation also do not teach or suggest moving the virtual camera closer to the moving plane.

For the above reasons, independent claims 1, 6-8, 13-15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25 are allowable.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection of dependent claims 2-5, 9-12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, be also withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing and other considerations, all claims are deemed in condition for allowance. A formal indication of allowability is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge the undersigned's deposit account #14-1140 in whatever amount is necessary for entry of these papers and the continued pendency of the captioned application.

NISHIMURA
Appl. No. 10/803,881
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Should the Examiner feel that an interview with the undersigned would facilitate allowance of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

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